WILLIAM GILLETTE'S SAMSON

HE SLAYS HIS FOE WITH THE PRICE OF COPPER.

The New Bernstein Melodrama at the Criterion Is Not So Well Written or So Well Played as "The Thief"—An Unpleasant Theme Crudely Handled.

When you were a little boy they bought you some fireworks to set off all by yourself on the Fourth of July. You lit a Roman candle, and it showered copious sparks while you shook it around and around in happy expectancy. Finally there was a pop—and out came one small, feeble, red star. You were a wee bit disappointed, though your bravely bid the fact. It wasn't the grand pyrotechnic display you had dreamed of.

"Samson," the second of Henri Bernstein's plays to reach America, as it was displayed by William Gillette at the Criterion Theatre last evening, reminded you of this childhood experience. There was the copious spark shower of two long preliminary acts—and then a third act which was not such a very big star after all, though it was red enough. "Samson," frankly, is a disappointment from the author of "The Thief." And Mr. Gillette, frankly, in the title part is a disappointment too, though not a wholly unexpected one. After all it is the expected which happens.

"Samson" gets its name from the closing episode narrated in Judges, not the episode of Delilah nor yet of the jawbone. *Maurice Brachard*, a self-made millionaire, finding himself an angle in the inevitable triangle, to revenge himself on his rival pulls down the pillars of the temple, which is to say he knocks the price of copper down from 800 to 600 francs, ruining himself, but crushing his wife's lover beyond hope of redemption. He does it while he has the rival locked up with him in a room; and that is the "big scene" of the play, the much heralded third act.

It is indeed a scene of considerable crude and turbulent passion, though the two long acts which have led up to it are needlessly prolix (or seem so in the present American adaptation) and rather dull. But for its exposition, for its proper emotional effect, it calls imperatively for an actor of emotional sincerity and authentic power, even for an actor who can "let himself go" with magnificent force.

Brachard, the outraged husband, is represented as a man of low origin, great strength, tremendous ability. He is the richest man in Paris, by his own efforts, and the most dreaded on the Bourse. Suspecting his wife, he learns who her lover is—a man he himself has put on the road to fortune by tips in copper—and lures him to a hotel room, where he keeps him by simulated friendly chatter till the hour is ripe for his raid in the market. Then he breaks out in a fury, almost chokes his rival to death as he wrests his weapon from him, and as the newsboys cry the alarm of panic from the street he lifts up his voice in horrible laughter.

And that is the part Mr. Gillette essayed to play.

Mr. Gillette has won for himself a fine reputation as an actor of comedy and of roles such as *Sherlock Holmes*, where the repression of emotion and picturesque demeanor combined in an effect of life. His *Brachard* in the new play has certain picturesque qualities of gesture, of mouth twitching and the like which are true and striking.

And, in the earlier scenes, his repression does undoubtedly result in the suggestion of smothered force. But, in this third act, when he is called on to throw repression to the winds, Mr Gillette, in all frankness, is quite ineffective. There is no tragic force, no brutal, overpowering uprising of the primitive man, no mastering passion of jealous fury suggested, suggested, that is, in such a way as to rouse you in your chair out front into kindred feeling, to send the tribute shiver down your spine. In the language of the theatre, he does not get the scene across.

Attention must be given at a later time to the adaptation, which surely in retelling Berntein's gross and unpleasant story tells it with a bare literalness and lack of distinction that does the author an unjustice. There were features of the supporting company, too, which did not mend matters. *Brachard* had married into the family of an aristocrat, but there was painfully little aristocracy suggested on the stage last night. Miss Constance Collier, a beautiful English actress, played the erring wife (who had not, after all, erred beyond redemption) with a suitable dignity and no little emotional force. And Frederic De Belleville, as the *Marquis*, her father, was, as the author intended, a satire on shallow nobility. But George Probert, as the son of the *Marquis*, played like a fresh youth out of a George Adefable, not a polished and epigrammatic young Parisian rounder, and Arthur Byron, who was the "society favorite" who closed the triangle, had stepped out of the pages of a certain well known lady novelist dear to the shop girls. Miss Pauline Frederick helped along the plot by a remarkable head dress and a strained artificial manner of playing.

In Paris, no doubt, these characters were recognizable types, and the long exposition required to reach the "big scene" had side lights of satire and humor to relieve it, to atone in some measure for the vulgarity of the episode. It has not here. "Samson," for us, is a domestic melodrama long drawn out and not tremendously exciting.

MRS. CLARK'S PLAY GOES WELL.

"Like Father Like Son" Has Initial Presentation in New Haven.

NEW HAVEN, Oct 19.—"Like Father Like Son," a farce by Jean Pardee Clark, had its initial presentation to-night at Poli's Theatre before a crowded house.

The secret marriages of James K. Teene and his son, James K. Teene, Jr., members of the Stock Exchange, to two actresses, Mabel Thompson, late member of the chorus, and Flora Belton, late of the Magpie Opera Company, respectively form the basis for the amusing complications that ensue while each tries to hide his matrimonial venture from the other.

The dialogue was witty, the situations were absurdly funny and the costuming and staging good. The author is a New Haven woman, and hundreds of her friends attended the first performance

"The Servant in the House" Returns.

"The Servant in the House" came back to the Savoy Theatre last night and was welcomed by a large audience. The cast is the original one with the exception of Edmund Rann Kennedy, brother of the author, Charles Rann Kennedy, who takes the part of *the Rev. William Smythe*, played last year by Charles Dalton.

EMIL SAUER PLAYS PIANO

HE PRODUCES HIS OWN ELEGANT FIRST CONCERTO.

A Composition Which Is Suited to the Player's Own Polished Style—Carl Pohlig Conducts the Philadelphia Orchestra—Liszt's "Faust" Symphony.

It was on the eleventh day of January, 1899, that Emil Sauer, pianist, made his first appearance in this country. The concert took place in the Metropolitan Opera House, and the principal numbers of the pianist were the Beethoven concerto in E flat and the Henselt concerto. There was also a group of unaccompanied pieces. The orchestra was conducted by Emil Paur. After several appearances Mr. Sauer passed into the hospitable West and returned to New York to play a farewell recital in May.

It was then made known that he was bidding adieu to New York for some years, and it has been demonstrated that he had not acquired the farewell tour habit, for he has just come back to this country. He made his reappearance last night in Carnegie Hall and played his own first concerto, assisted by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Carl Pohlig. Mr.—or Professor—Sauer, as he is now entitled to be called after long service as piano instructor in the Vienna conservatory, is more grave and reverend of front than he was at the time of his first visit Time has touched his flowing locks with the autumnal haze of the Wienerwald an i has reared above the a shining Schneeberg.

But the inexorable scythe bearer has written no wrinkles on the azure brow of his polite technic. He plays as he did of yore, with clear and fluent delivery of scale passages, with crisp enunciation of staccati, with shimmer of evanishing half tints of the tonal palette, with well bred accent and with dainty nuance

His is the art of an elegant and accomplished pianist whom the riotous passions of tragedy have never driven from the serene poise of his artistic demeanor. Urbanity, courteous consideration for the emotional comfort of his hearers and a gentlemanlike respect for the keyboard were his of old, and the years have but deepened his veneration for the conventions.

His cobcerto is in four movements labelled allegro patetico, scherzo, cavatina and rondo. This composition is in form and content a replica of the salient traits of Mr. Sauer's manner of playing a piano. If one is tempted to muse for a time on the strangely Chopinesque echoes of parts of the first and last movements, he will presently find the secret in that early love of this composer for the concerto of Henselt, which had for its motto the name of Chopin writ in water.

In the tintinnabulations of the scherzo the contemplative listener may discover a certain affection for the more reserved fancies of Mendelssohn, and in the faint reproduction of the spirit of the classic dance found in the final rondo perhaps there is even a trace of the too influential school of Viennese operetta. In form this is a pianist's concerto, with the inevitable proclamation of the image of a theme for piano and the immediate transfer of it to the orchestra in order that the solo instrument may deck it with streaming furbelows of scales and trills.

It would not be difficult to forecast for Mr. Sauer a triumphal progress among the women's clubs of this land with his concerto, for surely its laces and graces will appeal strongly to the feminine love of finery. But in these times of stress music is made of sterner stuff and in so far as New York is concerned there is now but little appetite for dainty trifles light as air. Last night's audience, overflowing with the milk of human kindness, recalled Mr. Sauer so heartily after his performance that he repeated the last movement of his composition with evident relish.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has increased in numbers since it last appeared here and is now a symphonic body of eighty-five musicians, large enough to grapple with all the contemporaneous tone problems. Its numbers last evening were Beethoven's "Leono a" overture, No. 3; Liszt's "Faust" symphony and Wagner's introduction to "Die Meistersinger." In the Beethoven music there was a decided want of beauty of tone, of accurate intonation and of general finish, much of which appeared to be the result of an attempt to crowd the auditorium with too powerful a body of sound.

Possibly the overture had not been especially studied for this concert, for the first movement of the Liszt symphony at once disclosed conditions entirely different. In this the orchestra played with far better quality of tone, with much more smoothness and elegance and with well considered gradations of power. For the vocal part of the work Mr. Pohlig had Paul Volkmann, solo tenor, and the Brooklyn Saengerbund for chorus.

News of Plays and Players.

Henry B. Harris signed yesterday a five years contract with Elsie Ferguson, leading woman of "Pierre of the Plains," in which Edgar Selwyn is now appearing at the Hudson Theatre, by which she is to play leads all that time. Four years ago she was a chorus girl in a musical comedy company.

The Eight Grunathos, German acrobats, were entertained by the Hippodrome company at yesterday's matinée under the tent in the big circus scene. The family performed at the Hippodrome all last season. They are now on their way to Germany for a visit home.

BROOKLYN BOROUGH BROKE.

President Coler Suspends 427 Employees—Even the Elevators Stop Running.

President Bird S. Coler of the Borough of Brooklyn yesterday laid off 427 borough employees, among whom are engineers, firemen, cleaners—men and women—and laborers. He also had this notice posted up conspicuously in the Borough Hall and other public buildings:

Notice is hereby given that all employees in this building are voluntarily working and that the acceptance of their labor involves no obligation to pay upon the part of the city of New York.

All the elevators in the Municipal Building, the County Court House and the Hall of Records stopped running and only one man was retained in the Borough Hall to run the elevator for the benefit of the Justices of the Appellate Division.

Among those suspended are many civil war veterans, who, acting on the advice of the War Veterans Association, will report for duty each morning.

Mr. Coler declares that his hands are absolutely tied by the depletion of funds and the failure of the Board of Estimate to grant him any money.

Dr. Bull's Illness.

No change in the condition of Dr. W. T. Bull, who is critically ill at his home, 35 West Thirty-fifth street, was reported yesterday. He passed a comfortable day.

PAIR FORBID TO LAND HERE

ONE A LIVERPOOL COAL MERCHANT, ONE A SEABORN NYMPH.

Allport Had $23 and Left a Wife and Baby at Home—Roy Bucey Is the Other and She Has $1,800, but She Can't Come In—Home by Cabin.

James Howard Allport, a coal merchant of Liverpool, accompanied by a young Englishwoman who calls herself Roy Bucey and says she was "born at sea, but is proud to say she is an English subject," arrived last Friday by the Cunarder Mauretania and were held up by the Ellis Island authorities at the request of the British consulate here. A despatch to the Consulate from the father of Allport said that he had been examined by an English alienist and had been found mentally unbalanced; that he had deserted his wife Beatrice and their baby in Liverpool and had gone away in company with Miss Bucey.

Allport and Miss Bucey were asked why they should not be deported and they answered that they were not improper persons. Allport said he had a good record and would make a desirable citizen. He said he had been here several times on business and that he thought it was a good place to stay in. He denied that he had come here with Miss Bucey as her husband. They had occupied separate cabins and she was merely a good friend He had $25 in cash.

Miss Bucey answered questions with directness and a bit of gayety She was asked what she did for a living and said she had an income, but that she had appeared on the stage.

"Then you are an actress?"

"I cannot say I am an actress; I simply have been on the stage." She said she had never been here before and intended if let go to stop at the Holland House. Asked if she thought she could afford it she said that she had $1,800 with her and more where that came from, in fact a large enough income to keep her comfortably so long as she might live.

Commissioner Watchorn decided that the pair ought to be returned to England, so they will sail to-morrow in the cabin of the Cunarder Mauretania.

THOMPSON'S NEW THRILLER.

"Via Wireless," by Paul Armstrong, Is Full of Scenic Effects.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19.—Frederic Thompson produced at the National Theatre here to-night for the first time Paul Armstrong's play, "Via Wireless," a big scenic thriller, with Miss Vera McCord, a California girl who has played mostly in London and the English provinces, in the leading rôle.

Miss McCord shared honors with William Mack, the well known character actor. Georgie Drew Mendum, Edwin Arden and Maude Granger also were in the cast. Many New York theatrical people came down for the première.

The play abounds with Thompsonesque scenic effects and the settings of the four acts permit the showman to let his imagination and his bank account run riot. The forging of big guns in a foundry at night in the second act, the two scenes of the third act—one a tropical exterior and the other showing part of the interior of a wireless station with a bit of open seascape whereon happen a tropical storm, a ship foundering in the waves and the communication by wireless between the station and the sinking ship—brought hearty applause from the audience. The play was staged by Winchell Smith, who also collaborated in part with Mr. Armstrong.

GUS ROGERS DEAD.

The Comedian Had Been Ill Since Sept. 30 With Typhoid Fever.

Gus Rogers, the comedian, died yesterday at his home, 200 West Seventieth street. He had been confined to his bed since September 30 with typhoid fever. Intestinal hemorrhage was the immediate cause of death, according to his attending physician, Dr. Hermann Collier of 153 West Seventy-seventh street. Up to last Sunday the comedian was not regarded as seriously ill.

His wife, known on the stage as Maud Raymond, is playing with Eddie Foy in "Hamlet of Broadway" in Pittsburg. She came to New York last week, but upon being assured that her husband was in no immediate danger she returned to her company in Pittsburg. She has been notified of Mr. Rogers's death and is expected to arrive this morning. Mr. Rogers became suddenly worse early on Sunday and Drs. Janeway, Delafield and Murray were called in consultation.

Arrangements for the funeral have not been completed, but the interment will be in Washington Cemetery in Brooklyn. The comedian is survived by two children, Leona and Ethel, and four brothers and four sisters, Max, now in Toledo, playing in "Rogers Brothers in Panama"; Joe, David, Charles, Mrs. A. T. Daus, Mrs. Louis Cohen, Mrs. Otto Meyer of New York and Mrs. Samuel Tash of Danbury, Conn.

Gus Rogers was born in this city in 1869, the son of Morris and Hannah Rogers, who celebrated their golden wedding last January. The father has since died. The family's real name was Solomon. The two brothers, Gus and Max, made their first professional appearance in a song and dance act at the National Theatre on the Bowery in 1885. In 1889 they appeared as Dutch comedians at Tony Pastor's Theatre, where they became so popular as to remain the entire season. Subsequently they appeared with Tom Miaco's City Club Company, Reilly and Wood and Hart's Boston Novelty Company and again with Tony Pastor. They first organized their own company in 1893 and at the close of that season returned again to Tony Pastor. In 1895 they figured in Donnelly & Girard's farce comedy "The Rainmakers." They played at Koster & Bial's in 1896 and created leading comedy parts in "One Round of Pleasure" at the Knickerbocker Theatre. In 1898 they appeared as joint stars in "A Reign of Error." This was followed by "Rogers Brothers in Wall Street," "Rogers Brothers at Harvard," "Rogers Brothers in Ireland" and their latest production, "Rogers Brothers in Panama."

Gus Rogers was married fifteen years ago to Maud Raymond, who was well known on the stage as a vaudeville favorite before she played with the Rogers brothers in "The Rainmakers" and several of their subsequent successes. She played the part of *Bossy*, a negro attendant, in "The Social Whirl" at the Casino Theatre in 1905-06 and the following season was seen in "The Gay White Way" at the same theatre.

It is understood that Gus Rogers left an estate of something short of half a million, which was made largely by judicious investments in real estate in this city and vicinity.

TOLEDO, Oct. 19.—Max Rogers was informed of his brother's death here to-night. "I owe all the success that I have to my brother being a successful business man besides being a very good actor in his line," he said. "All our success was due to my brother's business capability."

Max Rogers cancelled his company's engagements and chartered a special train to take his entire company to New York.

Amelia Bingham in Vaudeville.

Amelia Bingham made her début in vaudeville under the management of William Morris (Inc.) at the American Theatre yesterday. Her sketch, "Big Moments from Great Plays," is made up of parts of half a dozen widely known successes.

TOSCANINI GETS TO WORK.

Surprises Metropolitan Orchestra by Speaking English Fluently.

Signor Toscanini of La Scala took his place yesterday morning for the first time at the head of the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera House. Both orchestras were united, making a total of 130 men. Every one of that number was astonished when, after welcoming him with applause, the conductor began a speech in excellent English.

"I trust," he began, with scarcely a trace of accent, "that we shall derive only pleasure from our association and that our work together will produce results satisfactory to both of us. We have music as our common speech."

The members of the orchestra who had been led to believe that the new conductor spoke only Italian and a few words of French soon recovered themselves and gave him a fanfare.

There were other surprises at this rehearsal of "Götterdämmerung" with which Signor Toscanini elected to make the acquaintance of his men. He conducts on his feet, and is the first man in charge of an orchestra here to do that since the days of Anton Seidl. Then Signor Toscanini does not use a score, even for "Götterdämmerung." It lay on his desk before him, but he used it only to indicate to the musicians the number of the page to which he desired to attract their attention. All his directions to the players were given in English. The rehearsal of the first act of "Götterdämmerung" lasted for more than four hours, but the players were not too fatigued at the end of that period to give the new conductor another fanfare.

The new scenery made in Milan for "Aida," "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Le Wally" and "La Villi" has been put in place at the opera house and has proved entirely satisfactory. The scenery for "Tiefland," which is to be the first novelty produced, will be put in place to-day for the first time. The scenery for this opera, as well as for "Le Nozze di Figaro" and "Die Verkäufte Braut," were painted in a Viennese atelier.